

ARCHIVES

As defined by the Civil Service Commission for the Archives¹⁵¹ of the United States, Archives are "(1) those bodies of non-current permanently valuable records that form useful evidence of the organization, functions, policies¹⁵², decisions, procedures, operations or other activities of Federal Agencies¹⁵³ or very important Federal Officials, or (2) those records that must, or should, be preserved for their informational content.....Archival records document official actions and serve as sources for official reference in the prosecution of the affairs of Government by providing a record of past actions. The information contained in Archives is essential to historians, political scientists, economists, sociologists, or other scholars engaged in study in various aspects of our society."

Professional archival work involves the following broad, but not mutually exclusive, functions:

- (1) Appraisal and disposition
- (2) Arrangement and description
- (3) Preservation and rehabilitation
- (4) Documentary publication, historical editing, and exhibit of archival materials
- (5) Reference service

A sampling of these functions are described below to further clarify the professional distinctions between Archivists and Records Management Officers:

- (1) Records appraisal and disposition involves the analysis and evaluation of inactive records to determine their continuing value and to provide advice or make decisions about their destruction or permanent retention. Archivists employ a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the history, organization, and operations of the Agency; the legislative authorities and responsibilities of the Agency as these relate to the development and retention of records; the organizational, functional and records relationships of the Agency to other Agencies and activities in the intelligence community and federal government at large; and the needs of the scholarly community.

(2) Archivists engaged in records arrangement study the origins, the organizational and functional history and administrative procedures of the producing units. They analyze the records to decide the arrangement that will best reveal their character and significance; protect their integrity as historical evidence of organization and function; and facilitate their location, description, and use.

(3) Preservation involves safeguarding the archival material from deterioration or impairment of their value through alteration. It considers the condition of the records; the nature of their evidential or informational value; the extent of their use; and the cost of repair and rehabilitation.

(4) Archivists involved in publication work carefully study the documents to be published to resolve questions of origin and authenticity. They employ a thorough knowledge of the substance of the documents and persons, circumstances, or events to which the documents relate.